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ABSTRACT

The proposal for the sixth year of the Massachusetts Right to Read effort deals primarily with ten objectives derived from the national commitment to full literacy. (1) "Focus on Excellence," a booklet outlining 5 major goals and 26 conditions for an exemplary reading program, is used for the criteria of excellence. (2) The Right to Read program plans to continue the statewide needs assessment plan. (3) Training programs for local educational agencies must be continued. (4) Technical assistance will continue to be provided in the form of instructional conferences. (5) The State Education Task Force, which has been hampered by lack of funds, will continue to function. (6) The statewide Advisory Council will continue to offer advice for the program. (7) Certification requirements must move from the planning stage to the operational stage. (8) Identification and validation of the exemplary reading program will continue, culminating with the production of a flier announcing the approximately six Right to Read model programs. (9) The Right to Read message will be disseminated in Massachusetts, and (10) evaluation is considered an important part of the program. Although the Right to Read effort may move in a different direction in upcoming years, the program has been effective in its five years of functioning. (JF)

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THE MASSACHUSETTS RIGHT TO READ EFFORT



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A PLAN FOR THE SIXTH YEAR

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DIRECTOR

1978-1979

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INTRODUCTION

As in past years, this plan for the sixth year of the Massachusetts Right to Read Effort will deal primarily with ten objectives. These ten objectives, which originate in the National Right to Read Office, derive their urgency from the national commitment to full literacy. They depend for their implementation and fulfillment upon existing federal regulations and legislated expenditures. Under these sanctions Massachusetts will continue in 1978-1979 to follow the original Massachusetts Plan of Action, October, 1973. (The latter is on file both in Washington and Boston Right to Read Offices.)

With five and a half years of hard work and stubborn hope behind us as we write, it is not easy to anticipate the sixth year as perhaps the last year of the Right to Read Effort as we now know it. It would be sad to see a program altered significantly just as some fairly convincing evidence of Right to Read's success in this country begins to appear. And there is small comfort in being advised by colleagues wise in the ways of federal programming that the anticipated course of events is typical. The writer still finds it daunting that federal programs can be dropped or maintained for reasons extrinsic to the success or failure - in educational terms - of these programs.

It is difficult to know what Right to Read will be like after next year. Nonetheless, fairly specific ideas of what, in this writer's view, Right to Read should be like in this Commonwealth will become apparent to the

reader as he proceeds through the ten chapters of this plan.

I. Criteria of Excellence

A description of the genesis of the booklet Focus on Excellence has been given in previous plans written in application for either a continuation of the state leadership grant or for funding under new legislation. These plans are on file in Boston as well as in Washington, and are available upon request to readers wishing to know how the booklet was written.

The Focus on Excellence establishes five major goals and, under these five goals, describes twenty-six necessary conditions which, when satisfied, define an exemplary reading program. In Right to Read school systems in Massachusetts the booklet has been extensively used as a template for a successful reading program. Indeed the local needs assessment instrument used by Right to Read school systems in Massachusetts has been keyed to the Focus on Excellence. This in itself represents an important innovation. In the past, school systems seeking to upgrade reading programs by self-evaluation have seldom used criteria that reflected their own reading philosophy but have used instead existing tests and measures that failed to take into account the particularity of local strengths and weaknesses. Keying the needs assessment instrument to the criteria of excellence in Right to Read sites was one good way to narrow the always threatening gap between philosophy and practice.

The Focus on Excellence has also generated our series of position papers dealing with each of the five major goals. So far two of these have been written and widely disseminated throughout Massachusetts: Fostering Reading Interests and the latest, written last summer, On Reading. The latter

discusses reading in general and uses current research findings to make suggestions regarding developmental and remedial reading programs. Its third section contrasts traditional measures of reading performance with some of the new and current means of assessment.

The Focus on Excellence together with the position papers prepare the way for the eventual identification and validation of exemplary reading programs in this state by seeking to establish the consensus on standards necessary as the first step in developing such programs.

Finally, we have revised the Focus on Excellence to the extent of eliminating references to the now-defunct New England Consortium for the Right to Read Effort. In the revision due credit is given to Dr. Marion McGuire of the University of Rhode Island, author of the original text. This revised edition was comprehensively circulated last fall throughout the state.

II. Statewide Needs Assessment

In recent years, first the reading and then the writing abilities of a sample of nine and seventeen year olds in the Commonwealth's schools have been assessed. The results of the reading assessment (administered in 1974 and disseminated in 1975) showed that the nine year olds in Massachusetts read better than any other comparable group in this country. Not so the seventeen year olds. Although the latter group read as well as their national counterparts, they did not do as well as expected when one takes into account how well the state's nine year olds tested.

In 1975, the writing abilities of a sample of nine and seventeen year olds in Massachusetts were assessed. The results of this second assessment, which were disseminated in the spring of 1976, demonstrated

that both nine year olds and seventeen year olds wrote less well than any other comparable group in this country. This was the case despite the fact that on one subtest, mechanics, they scored rather well. This would seem to indicate that, although both groups have learned formal rules of writing, they are not able to apply them to the requirements of everyday practical writing.

It should be noted that because the majority of items used in the reading assessment and a number of items used in the writing test were public domain items appropriated from the 1971 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), comparisons of each age group's achievement can be made between states.

The second phase of a statewide needs assessment in reading is currently underway for the school year, 1977-1978. The test again will be administered to both nine year olds and seventeen year olds as it was in 1974. As a member of the technical committee, we can report on the progress to date of the second reading assessment. As in 1974, public domain items from NAEP were used to create a new instrument. Testing has already begun on a sample of students in our Commonwealth's schools and will be completed in March. Analysis of the data will take place in April and May, and the findings will be put in final form for wide dissemination in June, 1978.

Because the technical committee has included some items from the first assessment in this second assessment, it will be possible and interesting to see if the present nine year olds do as well as their counterparts did four years ago on these identical items. It will also be interesting to see if the seventeen year olds perform in the same manner as their counterparts did four years ago. If they do, then one can dare a conclusion: skill in reading apparently is lost as students move from the elementary to the secondary level. When the nine year olds of 1974 are tested four years hence (1982), if

they perform as poorly as the seventeen year olds tested in 1974, and, perhaps, the seventeen year olds tested in 1978, then we can definitely say in 1982 that the students do not develop to useful maturity the rudiments of reading acquired in the primary and intermediate grades. Subsequent experimental studies will then attempt to look for reasons for this arrested development.

As for phase two of the writing assessment, no decision has been made yet by the Board of Education, but we expect that a second assessment will be taken in 1978-1979 so that comparisons can be made with the phase one assessment of writing undertaken in 1975-1976.

Meanwhile, a statewide competency standards program is currently being developed to test communication (reading, writing, speaking, listening) skills of all thirteen year olds in Massachusetts. Those who fail the test will be remediated during their four years in high school. At certain intervals they will be retested until they pass the test. It is anticipated that graduation from a Massachusetts high school will be contingent upon the test being passed.

The advisory committee on statewide competency standards plans to make its final report to the Massachusetts Board of Education in June, 1978. If the Board approves the work of the committee, then implementation of statewide competency standards will probably go into effect in September, 1979.

It is possible - and encouraging - to view all these separately instigated evaluative manoeuvres as symptomatic of more than accumulating dissatisfactions with our system of education and with the social cost of minimally literate or even illiterate citizens. The urge honestly to take stock of mistakes and shortcomings in design or in execution may point to a comprehensive and painful but also revitalizing shock to every part of the educational system: to the classrooms in which students are taught; to the colleges and universities in

which students are taught to be teachers and teachers of teachers; to the homes in which children are first taught to be students; and indeed to the minds and spirits of the students, especially of those inclined to forget that students themselves bear the final responsibility for discovering and putting to work the minds with which they were born.

III. Training Program for Local Educational Agencies

Since Right to Read's inception, Massachusetts local Right to Read directors have been trained in one of three ways: by the New England Consortium, in one central place by the Massachusetts State Education Agency (SEA), or regionally by the regional technical advisors. In 1977-1978 we again adopted the last, regional, method.

Newly recruited Right to Read school systems selected their key reading persons, and these attended the training sessions in their respective regional centers. (In Massachusetts the six regional educational centers are, in effect, mini state departments of education.)

Having refined the training program over the course of five and a half years, no additional modifications will be required for next year. The subjects mandated by the National Right to Read Office continue to receive priority: change agent skills, task forces, needs assessments, staff development programs, formative and summative evaluations. Additional topics arise according to the particular needs of the locally designated Right to Read directors.

While confident that the training program as it now stands needs no further changes, we do feel that the success of these training sessions is largely dependent upon the skill of the technical advisor assigned to each of

the regional centers. Fortunately, we have highly competent people available to us. Three of our technical advisors are former local Right to Read directors who, having retired, joined the SEA as reading consultants. Two others continue to direct reading programs at colleges in Boston and Springfield. (In the Pittsfield region the regional manager is also a reading person and so is able to serve as their technical advisor as well.)

All technical advisors agree that the most effective training sessions involve offering something of substantive utility on the topic of the day, speaking briefly but with memorable vividness, and then encouraging lively discussion in which the newly recruited directors become the main speakers. In these sessions, they believe, useful and lasting learning is most likely to occur when the recruits - first inspired to attention and commitment - are able freely to share ideas, problems, successes, and strategies.

The regional manager's role is minimal. He is responsible for arranging for a suitable meeting room, sending notices of meetings, ordering coffee, etc. At present regional managers are regular State Department of Education employees located in all of the six regional educational centers.

In Massachusetts, local Right to Read directors are released from regular school activities for 120 hours of training, that is, thirty half days (4 hours) spread out over the school year. In addition new affiliates have been asked to attend three all-day conferences held in Boston in the fall, winter, and spring.

During recruiting sessions we have always encouraged local directors to bring guests to subsequent training sessions. Some of the most interesting LEAs are those where two people share the directorship: one an individual very knowledgeable about reading, the other an administrator with good administrative skills. Individual directors have often brought one or more members of their local in-house task force to the training sessions. These guests return to

their respective school systems with greater knowledge about the Right to Read Effort.

This year a new approach was taken with regard to signing contracts. Newly recruited affiliates were asked to attend the training sessions until January, decide whether or not their school system should continue as a member in good standing with the Massachusetts Right to Read Effort, make a formal presentation to their administration and school committee, and only then have the formal agreement signed. This procedure was adopted in order to prevent school systems from buying blindly into Right to Read and then dropping out halfway through the training year.

Given this new approach, we cannot say at this time how many new LEAs will become formal members of Right to Read, but it looks as if there will be from twenty to thirty new LEAs, a respectable increase for Right to Read in any given year.

In Boston and in Springfield the technical advisors this year have asked for permission to train new LEAs on-site rather than require them to come to a central place for training. This lessens the number of new LEAs that can be served in these two regions, yet it provides intensive and personalized technical assistance. We shall carefully monitor the work of the two technical advisors to Springfield and Boston and compare their training with that provided by the technical assistants in the other four regional centers.

What follows is an outline of typical training sessions in a Regional Education Center, in this case, the Central Massachusetts Regional Education Center.

R I G H T T O R E A D T R A I N I N G P R O G R A M

Greater Worcester

1976-1977

Meeting 1.....October	Welcome
	Massachusetts Right to Read Effort
	New Horizons in Reading
	Technical Details
Meeting 2.....November	Change Agent Skills
	New Horizons in Reading
	Local In-House Task Force
Meeting 3.....November	Focus on Excellence
	Group Interaction
	Decoding
	Local In-House Task Force
	Local Advisory Council
Meeting 4.....December	Needs Assessment Instrument
	Writing Discriminating Items by the In-House Task Force
	Preparing the Needs Assessment Instrument for Administration to Staff
Meeting 5.....January	Handouts, Scheduling of Make-up Sessions, etc.
	Veteran Local Right to Read Directors Present their Needs Assessment Instruments

Meeting 5 (continued).....January

Force Field Analysis

Reading at the Secondary Level

The Massachusetts Right to Read
Evaluation

Meeting 6.....February

Needs Assessment Summary

The Plan of Action

An Exemplary Reading Program

Staff Development

Meeting 7.....February

Change Agent Skills

Meeting 8.....March

Local Advisory Council--Panel
Discussion by Veteran Local Right
to Read Directors

Publicity and Community Involvement

State Advisory Council

State Right to Read Plans for
Next Year

Bimonthly Reports, etc.

Meeting 9.....March

Advisory Council--Panel
Discussion by Veteran Local Right
to Read Directors

Publicity and Community Involvement

Local Advisory Council

Workshop Session -- Bimonthly
Reports

Meeting 10.....March

Continuous Progress

Behavioral Objectives

Sequencing Skills

Criterion Referenced Tests

Meeting 10 (continued).....	March	Classroom Management
		Evaluation of Continuous Progress Reading Programs
Meeting 11.....	April	Writing Federal Proposals for Grants
		Chapter 766 & Reading
Meeting 12.....	April	Reading Comprehension
		Supervising a Reading Program
Meeting 13.....	May	Tutoring, Volunteers, Community Involvement
Meeting 14.....	May	Evaluating a Reading Program
		Administrative Support--Panel Discussion by Local Right to Read Superintendents
Meeting 15.....	June	Individual Conferences with Local Directors
Meeting 16.....	June	Plan for Staff Development Final Reports

During the final year of Massachusetts Right to Read the training program for LEAs, subject to any last-minute regulations, will not change significantly from what has been described above.

IV. Technical Assistance

For the seventy active Right to Read directors who have been with us for more than one year a number of large conferences have been scheduled. The first, on collaboration and cooperation among all professional organizations in Massachusetts concerned with reading, was held at Framingham State College on November 19, 1977. The National Right to Read Director, Dr. Gilbert Schiffman, gave the keynote address.

The second all-day conference was held at the Park Plaza Hotel in Boston on December 8, 1977. The topic for this conference was change agent skills. Mr. Leonard Berman from New Jersey gave the workshop on this most nebulous and hence troublesome of topics. Of the many speakers on change agent skills we have used in the past, only Mr. Berman seems able to address the subject with any degree of authority and sophistication. For a number of years he has earned high ratings in Massachusetts from those who have attended his workshops.

The third conference to be held in the spring will deal with securing local administrative and community support for the Right to Read Effort. The topic is a critical one, since a major weakness in a good many local areas is administrative failure to go beyond paying mere lip service to reading as a top school priority to providing the local Right to Read director with substantial support. Both the local director and his superintendent will be asked to attend and fully participate in this conference. In addition to these large conferences, at intervals throughout the year, six days of advanced training are being offered to veteran LEA directors at the regional educational centers.

Of particular interest this year, local Right to Read directors from four out of the six regional centers have organized themselves into reading lobbies with officers, constitutions and by-laws. We view this development as a very good thing. Should Right to Read as a federal endeavor change direction so radically as to become something very different from what it is presently, then these veteran LEAs can at least rely upon each other for an exchange of problems, resources, and solutions. As an organized professional group they can help as well to keep reading in the public spotlight as a top priority item.

Meanwhile it remains necessary to provide to local Right to Read school systems small mini grants for intensive in-service training of staff. Massachusetts Right to Read accordingly seeks adequate monies to award small grants to Right to Read sites for staff development. We believe it is more equitable and effective to do this than to award vast sums to school systems not formally affiliated with the Massachusetts Right to Read Effort as occurs when a lump sum of monies is granted under the Reading Improvement Act to large urban school systems in this state. Such monies would be more cost effective if they were placed in the hands of the State Director to use at his discretion for ongoing programs in staff development.

On file in the Massachusetts Right to Read Office are letters from local directors requesting funds for staff development. These do not ask for a great deal of money. Indeed if mini grants were awarded to those Massachusetts LEAs who were ready for staff development programs, the total amount would be far less than the grants given to just one Massachusetts urban school system last year for a reading improvement project. Consequently we feel that requesting more money than we asked for last year so as to meet the innumerable requests for staff development money at Right to Read sites is reasonable and cost effective.

V. Statewide Advisory Council

This state's Advisory Council has taken literally its mandate to offer advice of the most widely applicable sort. This can best be judged by reading the about to be widely circulated white paper, Getting Back To Reading, February, 1978. This document will be sent to the National Office and disseminated throughout Massachusetts and all Right to Read states by the end of January, 1978. It represents the culmination of two and a half years work by an advisory body composed in roughly equal numbers of reading and other professionals representing the fields of medicine, law, journalism and the arts as well as elementary, secondary and post-secondary school education.

First convened in 1976 under the chairmanship of Mrs. Jean H. Slingerland, the Council's first task was, with the assistance of this writer and a series of invited speakers, to inform itself as broadly as possible on the general state of literacy in this Commonwealth as reflected in current educational research and recent Massachusetts assessments. This Council, building on the work of its predecessor, which in previous years had generated a set of philosophic principles underlying the Right to Read Effort, decided that the next step was to speak out directly concerning the gap between intentions and accomplishments, possibilities and actualities, high hopes and practical realities. In consequence, the report goes beyond restatements of the urgency that underlies all Right to Read endeavors. Instead, it attempts to be specific and practical in offering suggestions for combatting the widely perceived and documented tendency for reading skills and appetites to decline once the most basic skills have been acquired in the elementary grades (see Chapter II, Statewide Needs Assessment.)

As the Council deliberated and tried to muddle through apparently multiple social, political, ideological, bureaucratic and electronic impediments to full literacy to create a series of basic prescriptions for success, it was greatly helped by the continuity of membership it enjoyed. Admittedly, a few faint hearts dropped by the wayside, but of the original two dozen members in 1976 more than half survived to undertake the task of writing. By the time of the Council's last full meeting in June, each of three subcommittees had produced a working paper dealing respectively with the parents', the teachers', and the students' particular responsibility in the learning and liking to read process. Their substantive work completed, the full membership has not been reconvened while the final editing and proofing of the report went forward this fall. Council members not involved in this last stage have been kept informed by the chairman of the final arrangement of the report in two documents, one a formal statement, the other a flier suitable for the widest possible dissemination.

We expect that parents will welcome the advice for its specificity, teachers for its insistence upon shared accountability and students for the respect it shows their capacity for assuming grown up responsibility.

In the meantime a subgroup of reading specialists, members of the Advisory Council last year, will be on call to read, rate, and rank reading improvement projects submitted for funding for the fiscal year 1978-1979.

VI. State Education Task Force

The State Education Task Force in Massachusetts this past year consisted of twelve members representing federal and state projects and programs concerned with reading. These twelve members are housed in the six regional centers in

the Commonwealth. The group, representatives from, for example, Title I, Adult Education, Bilingual Education, Special Education, Occupational Education planned to have a one-day institute for all State Department of Education personnel concerned with reading instruction in our schools. Permission was granted by Commissioner Anrig to hold such an institute. Due to a cut in our grant last year, the institute had to be cancelled.

VII. Certification

Certification requirements in this Commonwealth have not moved from the planning stage to the operational stage. This is largely due to the fact that money - the bane of all educators - does not exist to carry out the original plans for having independent observers observe a tyro's teaching performance and decide whether or not he or she had demonstrated competency sufficient to warrant provisional and, ultimately, permanent certification as a classroom teacher.

And yet, behind this failure to implement certifying procedures lies more than fiscal constraint. First, it should be remembered that the various reading roles have never been differentiated with any degree of specificity and consistency by reading specialists. Hence confusion exists in the minds of professionals outside of the specialized field of reading as to just what constitutes professional preparation standards for reading specialists.

There is also no question in our mind that we have not moved certification out of its present limbo because there is a very real fear on the part of many educationists that we may be building up another structural intrusion between the student and his regular classroom teacher. We have seen this happen time and time again with other programs, and it is possible that putting

ones imprimatur on reading specialization will create another empire in a field already rife with empires and special-interest groups.

In the meantime, a document entitled Recommended Standards for Professional Preparation in Reading Education (1976) developed jointly by the New England Reading Association and the former New England Consortium for the Right to Read Effort continues to enjoy wide dissemination in New England. This document is a most comprehensive one modeled after the guidelines set down by the International Reading Association.

VIII. Identification and Validation of Exemplary Reading Programs

There appears to be a significant breakthrough in regard to this particular objective. Initial conversations with directors of two other federal programs resulted in an observation protocol adapted from models emanating from the Joint Dissemination Review Panel and from the National Right to Read Office in Washington. It was then field tested. We now have a protocol that can be used collaboratively. And Right to Read now has a firm basis from which to validate as exemplary whole programs or parts of programs and to recommend their adoption.

At our last meeting in December, 1977, it was estimated, on the basis of past experience, that probably a half dozen programs would be identified as exemplary between January, 1978, and June, 1978. A memorandum from the writer to all present affiliates of Right to Read alerted them to the fact that we would be calling upon them rather soon and asking them to consider submitting their program for approbation.

We now intend to call a meeting in February of selected, veteran local Right to Read directors from 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976 so they can work out the

mechanics of on-site visitations. Then, using the observation protocol developed collaboratively by Right to Read, Title IV.C and Title I Dissemination this past year, a team of local Right to Read directors will visit school systems that have submitted programs for validation to determine whether or not they fit the criteria for being proclaimed by the State Department of Education as an exemplary reading program either in toto or in part.

In June, 1978, when all validations have been completed, a flier will announce the approximately six model Right to Read programs, describe them, and give the name of a contact person as well as any other pertinent information. This flier will be given to all 1,400 members of the Massachusetts Reading Association at their annual convention next year. In addition, a final report will be sent, through Mr. Robert Watson, Bureau Director, to Commissioner Gregory Anrig and the State Board of Education describing the course we have taken to meet their mandate of identifying, validating and recommending for adoption exemplary Right to Read programs in Massachusetts.

IX. Dissemination

The SEA continues to participate in an ever-increasing number of speaking engagements, staff development programs, symposia, panel discussions, and radio and television talk shows. In fact, the volume of requests for us to speak has become such that we have been **forced** to refuse more engagements than we would like to. When Right to Read began in Massachusetts in 1973, the writer worked mightily to get on the speaking circuit in order to publicize Right to Read. Now we fear that we might have overextended ourselves promising more than one person in Right to Read can ever deliver.

Although requests from adults who wish assistance in learning how to read have diminished somewhat (from a former three to five telephone calls per week down to one or two), we continue to keep a constantly updated list of adult literacy centers in the state. We refer all callers to a center nearest their home and offer further assistance should they have difficulty making contact with these sometimes ephemeral locations.

This year we received an overwhelming number of requests from organizations and individuals for publications developed under the auspices of the Massachusetts Right to Read Effort. These requests come not only from within the state but from many other parts of the country as well. These requests are always honored, and whatever booklets, pamphlets, brochures are requested are sent out immediately.

Because we have developed many different kinds of materials, reports, and position papers in Massachusetts, the writer has had printed up and sent to public and private organizations a list of Right to Read publications. This expedites our fulfilling requests in a more comprehensive and orderly manner than heretofore.

We have mentioned elsewhere in this proposal that a second position paper has been written on developmental reading, remedial reading and measuring reading performance. A copy of this position paper was sent to all school systems in Massachusetts. For the writer believes that it is proper and necessary for State Department of Education personnel to take positions on educational matters in the hope that out of discussions, disagreements, and debates a practical consensus will emerge. These position papers appear to generate more awareness, publicity, and respect for the Massachusetts Right to Read Effort than several other activities previously tried and, for one reason or another, found wanting. Therefore, what was initiated for

other reasons (i.e., keying position papers to the Focus on Excellence to set the foundation for validating exemplary reading programs) has turned out to be a powerful tactic for disseminating the Right to Read "message" in this state.

To end this particular chapter on a more somber note, the Massachusetts Right to Read SEA, from the very start has always tried to be realistic in promising no more and no less than we could deliver. Too often in the past did federal and state programs begin with grandiose promises that could never be met in a hundred years. This writer has no desire to follow such a course, and has resisted mightily those who would try to make Right to Read in Massachusetts one gigantic snow job.

Now that we have established ourselves hopefully as a creditable organization in this state, it is important that we keep to our original resolve, lest, like the dinosaur, as we grow bigger and bigger we become feebler and feebler.

X. Evaluation

In last year's proposal for a fifth-year grant, the writer confessed having certain reservations about the kinds of evaluation done at the end of each year by an outside, independent agency. For precisely what these concerns were the reader is referred to last year's plan of action (1977).

This year the writer contracted with a new agency, Vazquez-Nuttal Associates, Inc., Newton, Massachusetts, to do the fifth-year evaluation. The contract went to this group because they submitted a proposal that approached the kind of assessment the writer had in mind for the Massachusetts Right to Read Effort in its fifth year. No longer does he wish or need to

know how effective the training program was for local Right to Read directors. He wants, rather, to find out just what transpires when the local directors return home and begin to activate the Right to Read process with teachers and administrators within their own communities.

To that end, the evaluating agency this year will conduct case studies in representative Right to Read sites in Massachusetts. In this way we shall learn just what happens, or fails to happen, at home after LEA directors have been comprehensively trained by us in the regional educational centers. For it really doesn't matter if LEA directors receive outstanding training at the centers, if everything stops there. The heart of our endeavors is that these local directors should return to their own school systems and there succeed in upgrading teachers' skills to the end that these teachers teach better and youngsters learn to read better. Whether or not this is happening our on-site case studies this year should tell us.

Next year we shall look at the reading achievement of students in Right to Read sites that have accomplished their intermediate goals (i.e., designated a change agent to return home and upgrade teacher skills), in terms of the primary goal of Right to Read, which was, and still is, to get students to read better than they now do. In 1979, the time will be upon us to see whether or not Right to Read made a difference with students' reading achievement. The final evaluation contract will go to the outside, independent agency that presents the best proposal for getting an answer to this most important question.

CONCLUSION

We end this proposal as we began it, lamenting the fact that the Right to Read Effort seems destined to go in a different direction after next year. We are sorry, because we recognize that, given sufficient time, the Right to Read process works instrumentally in reducing, if not entirely eradicating, the number of illiterates and non-readers in our country. While we sadly accept the fact that this is frequently what happens with federal programs, our sadness is also assuaged by believing that, even in the absence of a federal program called Right to Read, what has been built up here in Massachusetts will continue of its own accord for some time to come.

If pressure for a "return to the basics" continues unabated, clearly the "Basic Skills Movement" will become the new center of the federal thrust against illiteracy. The extent to which the Right to Read organizational structure can be assimilated to this presently evolving movement remains to be seen. It seems clear enough that the writer and his counterparts in the other states and territories will play a pivotal role as consultants to all the other federal programs with a reading component. However, as collaborative efforts at the federal, state, and local levels in the past have been somewhat disappointing, one may well wonder if the "Basic Skills Movement" will be a sufficient catalyst for the kind of collaboration which has always been desired but rarely realized.

Meanwhile, lest the hard-won momentum for reading skills and reading gains be slackened during this transitional period, we plan to act during this last year of the Massachusetts Right to Read Effort as if the program were going to continue in its present form for the next twenty

years. Communities and school administrations still need prodding to give reading a top educational priority; teachers still need the best in-service training we can direct them to; parents still need to know that their federal tax dollars are helping disseminate to their children's schoolrooms what research, evaluation, and professional wisdom can helpfully provide. Titles, labels, administrative structures, and percentages of the tax dollar are easy enough to shift around when educational results are disappointing. What remain unalterable - because they are bound up in the very nature of a modern and free society - are the goals of full literacy and the prerequisites for coming ever close to those goals. This being so, under whatever banner in the future this work goes forward, we and those we have recruited to help us will continue to support what is effective and to revise or discard what seems puerile. In this way we can continue to hope to reduce the number of illiterates and non-readers in this great Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Joseph J. Tremont
Director
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